

Minnesota Transportation Museum



MINNEGAZETTE

Summer 2003







Official Journal of the
**MINNESOTA
TRANSPORTATION
MUSEUM, INC.**

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CIRCULATION

The **MinneGazette** is published quarterly by the Minnesota Transportation Museum, Inc., and is mailed to members in good standing without charge under Third Class postal permit. Members may request First Class Mailing for an additional \$7 per year charge.

SUBMISSIONS

The **MinneGazette** welcomes submissions for publication of articles, photos and other illustrative materials of historical interest relating to transportation in the Upper Midwest. No payment is made, and publication is at the editor's discretion.

MUSEUM PURPOSE

The Museum is a non-profit educational corporation organized in Minnesota in 1962 to preserve and communicate to the public the experience of Minnesota's surface public transportation history. It operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and the Minnehaha Depot in Minneapolis, the Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul, the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Ry. in Osceola and the Steamboat Minnehaha and the Excelsior Streetcar Line in Excelsior.

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Roundhouse Division: Noel Petit
Lake Minnetonka Division: Mike Kramer



Automotive technology has found its way onto the rails over the years. This homemade snow plow is on the Duluth & Northeastern at the Cloquet engine house. It survives today at the privately owned Iron Horse Central Railroad Museum near Chisago City.
MTM collection and Eric Hopp photo.



Front cover: World War II women engine wipers work on Soo Line 4-8-2 #4002 at Shoreham roundhouse in 1944.
Minneapolis Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Inside front cover: This rather sad view shows the remains of the Como-Harriet line station and bridge over 36th Street at Lake Calhoun. Note the steps at right leading to the station platform. The date is Dec. 1, 1955, 18 months after abandonment.
Norton & Peel photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

-Bill Handschin

These are challenging times for the museum, and I wanted to fill you in on the situation. As you probably know, the Executive Director's job is currently unfilled, and there is a new slate of officers on the Board of Directors.

Finances

The Chairman's Column in the Winter 2003 Minnegasette gave a good description of where MTM gets its money. At that time the revenue trend line was down, and that situation has not improved. Insurance costs are up, and revenues from April's Thomas the Tank Engine event fell far short of expectations. Our summer operating season has a long way to go, but so far there is no reason to expect an increase in revenues over last year. On the short term positive side, not paying for an Executive Director is helping our bottom line. In the long run, however, we need a person in that position.

What can be done, near term and long term, to right this situation? In the short term, I see several possible strategies, listed in no particular order:

1. Keep the Executive Director position vacant, and reduce other staff cost selectively. This must be done in such a way that it doesn't backfire and actually reduce revenues.

2. Sell off collection pieces that are surplus to MTM's needs, or do not conform to the Collections Policy.

3. Reduce the cost of marketing and marketing materials, concentrating more heavily on free publicity sources.

4. Solicit more donations from members. The Traction Division and the Lake Minnetonka Division already do this on an annual basis, but the Railroad Division never has asked for donations.

5. Implement on-line merchandise sales on the MTM website.

6. Recruit more members, starting perhaps with a joint membership sharing effort with the Great Northern and Northern Pacific historical societies.

In addition to the savings listed above, we need to hold off on any non-essential purchases. If you are a museum official with purchasing authority, ask yourself if we really need to make this particular purchase. If you don't have purchasing authority, you need to get approval or you will be personally responsible for any unauthorized expenditure. Let's not make things worse.

I'm sure there are other short term possibilities, and I encourage members to suggest them to me or to the other Board members and staff.

The long term vision

Short term measures will help, but more is needed if the museum is to prosper in the long term. We need to create a governance and management structure that attracts revenue and encourages more volunteerism. Let me be clear that the present decentralized division structure has done a lot. By spreading out the administrative load over the divisions, many more volunteers have become active than if a single central board made all the decisions.

There are, however, functions that only a central administration can do productively. Over the past three years we have centralized merchandising, marketing and communications, and those have been positive efforts. The pieces we are missing are fund raising, volunteer recruitment and a continuing program of management development.

More than that, we have tended to look inward for these resources, rather than reaching out to the broader community for help. I strongly believe that if we bring in outside expertise, the fund raising, volunteer recruitment and management development will follow. To this end the Board will be looking outside the museum membership for people to serve on the Board of Directors.

Some members have expressed concern that we intend to turn the Board over to outsiders and that the active volunteers will no longer have a say in policy matters. Let me assure everyone that is not the case. MTM volunteers will continue to serve on the Board as they do today. We only want to add outside resources to strengthen our management team.

Becoming more integrated with the greater Twin Cities community is part of becoming a main stream history organization. I hope we can attract corporate sponsorships. I hope we can do joint programs with the Science Museum, the Children's Museum and the Minnesota Historical Society. That's where the future lies.

For now, we need to concentrate on plugging the financial holes. If you have never made a tax deductible donation to MTM, this would be the time to start. If you have donated in the past, please consider giving again or giving more. Donations of your time are also most welcome. If you have contacts that could help the museum, please call me at 651-644-7383. And thank you for being an MTM member.

TRACTION REPORT

- Louis Hoffman

The Campaign for Como-Harriet

Response to The Campaign for Como-Harriet has been strong. Pledges total nearly \$24,000.00 after a short period of time. Including previous Annual Appeal donations earmarked for the TEA-21 renewal, we've now raised nearly \$38,000.00 of the \$175,000.00 we need. Please, don't forget your donation to The Campaign!

General Services Department Update

Look for the new Como-Harriet Streetcar Line yellow brochure (it's actually primarily green). It began appearing in the Linden Hills Station, aboard the streetcars, and at other locations when the last of the previous edition was used up. Featuring a bold new design, including a creative use of TCRT colors, by Linden Hills graphic designers **Bill and Linda Lundborg** of West 44th Street Design, it features information about all seven of the Museum's streetcars and adds basic information about the Excelsior Streetcar Line to encourage Como-Harriet passengers to make the short trip to Excelsior.

The Lundborgs also designed The Campaign for Como-Harriet brochure that you've all received, the directional signs that will be installed at several key intersections this fall or next spring in the neighborhood to attract people to the station, and will develop a brochure designed to attract additional charter and group business, hopefully for the 2004 season. We're also planning a large "HAVE YOU RIDDEN THE TROLLEY LATELY?" banner for the back of the Station, visible to autos on the Parkway and people on the paths. Also on the docket is updating the platform signs.

Thanks to **Bill Arends, Aaron Isaacs, and Mike Miller** for staffing the Como-Harriet table at the Linden Hills Fair on Sunday afternoon, May 18. In addition to information about the Museum, the table also featured the new CHSL brochure, the new Campaign for Como-

*Leave
A LEGACY*





The annual Memorial Day service to Lakewood Cemetery set a record for ridership this year. Business was brisk at the entry gate. Aaron Isaacs photos.

Harriet brochure, a number of artifacts, exhibits, and photographs, and the popular Grand Trolley Raffle tickets. Many books and raffle tickets were sold.

Long-time member Bill Marshall, who died on May 29, donated three interesting specimens - from Denver Tramways with a triangular hole in the center, Lincoln (Nebraska) Traction, featuring a penny-like profile of Abraham Lincoln, and the TCRT-affiliated Twin City Motor Bus Company. The TCMB token is substantially larger than TCRT streetcar tokens and feature a Minnesota Twins-like "TC." Thanks, Bill, for the donation, and for your years of service to the Museum.

Thanks again to **Dennis Mitzel** and Information Hotline. Information Hotline is a service available in more than 8,000 hotel rooms in the Twin Cities that lists area attractions. Once again, for a very modest fee, the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line is included in Information Hotline.

Here's the ridership for May:

Streetcar	Passengers Scheduled	Tokens	Charters	Passengers Chartered
265	4,465	3,251	4	70
322	1,058	867	0	0
1300	0	0	0	0
Total	5,523	4,118	4	70

As usual, the ridership highlight of the month was Memorial Day, in partnership with Lakewood Cemetery. Lakewood opens its "streetcar gate" adjacent to our Lake Calhoun platform on Memorial Day only. This gives visitors to Lakewood's many holiday events the opportunity to take a



streetcar ride. And it also gives visitors from outside the neighborhood to park at Lake Harriet and take the streetcar -

avoiding parking and traffic woes at the Hennepin and 36th main gate. Service starts at 9:00 a.m. and continues through dusk with two cars on the 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. shift. This year, to make operations more efficient, a platform agent was assigned to the Lake

Calhoun platform for crowd control and token sales. Thanks to **Kathy Kullberg** and **Kathy Prestholdt** for handling this position on the advance and first shifts. Fortunately, the weather was not only good, but great. Here's statistics for the three-day weekend:

	Psgrs.	Tokens
Saturday	474	341
Sunday	855	667
	(626/491 on #265's 27 trips and 229/176 on #322's 13)	
Monday	1,357	1,163
	(827/714 on #265's 40 trips and 530/449 on #322's 20)	
Total	2,686	2,191

This was the best Memorial Day yet and the fifth-best passenger count and the best token count in 32 Mays.

In late May, a crew from Twin Cities Public Television came out and filmed some introductions for a rebroad-cast of Lost Twin Cities aboard #265. It aired on Sunday, June 8 and featured a nice plug for our line, including our fare and schedule.



A little noticed feature of the historic Cottage City streetcar stop is this stairway on the north side of William Berry Road that accesses a gate to Lakewood Cemetery. Aaron Isaacs photo.

In the last issue, we raised the idea of a Christmas Ghost Trolley later this year. A more manageable idea (better weather if Easter is late and less chance of snow) might be an Easter Bunny Trolley the weekend before Easter, Easter weekend, or both. Anyone interested in helping with a Christmas or Easter event? Please let me know at (612) 729-0442 or hamhoff@msn.com. We're also looking for people interested in collection development and management, education, exhibit design and construction, and interpretation to serve on the Marketing and Public Relations and Museum Services Committees. You don't have to know anything about it. We just want folks with an interest in helping.

We're also discussing a program that would involve the opportunity to be photographed in a streetcar uniform, with or without a uniformed motorman, on or next to the streetcar and, for an additional fee, the opportunity to operate the streetcar under supervision along the siding. Another thought is having "living history" aboard the cars - actors in period costume bringing the streetcar era alive. Interested? Let me know.

Mechanical Department Update

As this report goes to press, work continues on #1300 in the Linden Hills



With assistance from MTM, the East Troy museum has returned its ex-Twin City car to something much closer to the original appearance. It now wears a correct late 1940s paint scheme, including TCRT logo, and has traded the fictional Duluth car number for its real Twin Cities identity, #1583. Steve Meyer photo.

Shops. Thanks to Shop Foreman **Karl Jones**, the Tuesday morning crew, and everyone who's contributed to the continued renewal of the centerpiece of the Museum's collection.

Personnel Department Update

Welcome to our operator trainees: **Mike Helle** (who was married on the streetcar), **Kirsten Jacob** (daughter of

Charter Crew Caller and Foreman **Jerry Olsen**), **Maria Olsen**, and **Erik Schwartzkopf**. Former operator **Don Pribble** has returned to the fold. Welcome - and welcome back. Many thanks to Superintendent **Dave Culver**, who has resigned. Thanks, Dave, for your hard work as Superintendent and for all your other contributions to the Museum.

CLASSIC BUS OPERATIONS IS REBORN

-Ken Luebeck

If we in the Classic Bus Division of the Museum had told all of you last September that we were going to be running three buses in support of the Thomas event the following spring, all of us (myself included) would have laughed. Some of us had been wondering, "Is there a classic bus?" Maybe #1399 was just a bad dream. Wonder no more. In a very real sense, for us in the Classic Bus Division, this past year has been like a miracle year from God.

During the Thomas event MTM buses logged 13,670 rides (counting both directions). And though two of them put out as much smoke as #328 at speed and all of them had rough exteriors, they were a hit. Interior ads stated, "You're riding the Museum at Work" and explained how the buses were active MTM restoration projects. Our service was very well received and appeared to run without a hitch. Wide aisles made for easy boarding of strollers; two doors for faster boarding and alighting. The buses provided a pleasant surprise also for the ones paying the bill: the parents and grandparents. All this and a friendly driver, such as the one and only **Mike Buck**, greeted you at the door. Upon rounding the corner onto the Jackson Street Bridge, the kids began playing "Look for Thomas" and the bus would putter slowly across the bridge until everyone got a chance to see the star attraction.

Drivers came out of the woodwork from all over the place to help us drive. We were pleasantly surprised to learn of all the current members who already had the proper credentials to drive. In addition to **Mike Buck**: **Fred & Lael Beamish**, **Dave Culver**, **Dick Fish**, **Burt Foster**, **Scott Heiderich**, **Mort Jorgenson**, **John Kennedy**, **Greg LaFontaine**, **Dick Loeffler** and **Nick Modders**. Three new volunteers joined the Museum just so they could drive. Our thanks to **Dawn Bartylla**, **LEE Bennett**, and **Bill Treleven**. Dawn wins the prize for the most resolve to drive. She came to JSRH at 2 AM, after her shift at the Metro Transit Control Center, because that was the only time we could work out for her to have the orientation session. LEE was oriented at a slightly more hospitable 8 PM the same night. General Superintendent **Ken Luebeck**, who had spent the night sleeping in a bus trying to find out who was pitching

rocks over the bridge at our buses, carried her and LEE's membership forms in his hat for day waiting for the chance to turn them in. Our special thanks to all who helped drive.

During the first weekend four youth who lived in the neighborhood across the tracks from JSRH flagged down Ken to see why 1950's buses were going up their street all week. When informed of the event, they became excited. But they soon were disappointed when they realized they couldn't afford the cost. So we offered them a ride around the loop for free. The second weekend a girl from that group was on a bus and recognized Ken, who was riding. "Remember me?!" And then she excitedly explained how they had made it into the event. Earlier in the day they had flagged down driver **John Kennedy**, who knew nothing of the earlier free ride. Only this time a father-an unknown patron-overheard how they couldn't afford the event and bought them four tickets! And now they were on their way home.

Another time two women going for a walk on their lunch break inquired at the parking ramp about the buses and what was going on. Though they didn't go into the event, later that day they did go for a ride around the loop. And they popped in a donation too!

One day of the event, Manager of Maintenance **Phil Epstein** and Curator/Shop Hand **Mike Ondecker** responded to the parking ramp with the bus tools. A broken down bus? No, a dead battery in a patron's car. The very thankful woman was on her way few minutes later.

We did have one breakdown which briefly stranded its customers until the rescue bus arrived. Seeing #1364 sitting down the street from the front gate a bit too long, Ken handed his beverage to **Nick Modders**, who had been waiting to take over driving, and sprinted to the broken down bus. Phil and Mike were radioed for help, and the bus was soon on its way to the shop. Using a spare shift governor previously prepared for such an occurrence, Phil had it running again in under 30 minutes.

On a warm Sunday driver **Fred Beamish** opened up a vent in the driver's area on #1303 only to find leftover parts of a bird's nest flying at him. Seems we had spent more time on the undersides of the buses making sure they were safe than we had poking inside all of the vents. Needless to say that bus was briefly replaced with the back-up to allow for cleaning. Fred's wife Lael found no nests in #1171 that day.

By the second weekend of the event, we were asked if we had enough confidence in our machines to commit to running three buses each day all day. (We had been running only two, with the third held for a spare.) So we did. The contract with Comfort Bus for the school buses was reduced-saving the Museum some money. And our drivers signed up for more shifts.

This is what we do in the Classic Bus Division. We expect to be doing more of this sort of thing coming up. Our workhorse buses will be a small fleet of the same general type, General Motors Model 5105. A few will represent the fleet Twin City Lines owned. Two or three will be in the historic schemes of other noteworthy companies. We will stock interchangeable parts to help keep our buses in tip-top shape. In due time we'll have a few unusual types, such as the Mack #630 or the 1935 Yellow Coach on display. Now that we have #1399 back, we'll be doing much recruiting to build up our staff. With a small stream of high profile events coming to the Museum next year and other business we will seek, we'll need the new volunteers. We have our work cut out for us and some challenges ahead. But we hope to put on quite a show-and make much needed revenue too!

The last day of the Thomas event, on a trip to the parking lots, we gave our spiel thanking the patrons for coming and supporting the Museum. They erupted in applause.

Behind the Scenes at Thomas

Did you notice how busy the MTM Bus Shops (i.e. the space borrowed in the west lot at JSRH) were during Thomas? Many of us throughout the Museum put hours of work in to run Thomas. We in the Classic Bus Division were no exception. As smooth as our service ran, we expected to and advertised that we would break down at least once and planned for difficulties. We simply did not have enough time running these buses to find every last small thing that could go wrong. Following is the partial story of what it took to deliver.

The first thing fixed by **Phil Epstein** in the fall of 2002 was the forklift at JSRH. Phil returned to the Museum after an absence of several years to become our new Manager of Maintenance. Thanks to **Scott Heiderich** for recruiting him. No one could pay someone enough money to get the dedication Phil has brought to the Museum. We had acquired a couple engine cradles from River's Edge in

Somerset, WI as parts for #1399 but couldn't move them because the fork was broken. So Phil fixed the fork. Actually we had bought three engine cradles. The best of the cradles was inside ex-Twin City Lines bus #1364. So we got the whole bus. #1364 soon became a test bed. Phil began working on miscellaneous spare parts. He installed them in #1364 to verify they worked. All the while we worked out the logistics of swapping engine cradles in #1399. #1364 was in such good shape that Phil soon had it running circles in the back lot at JSRH. After that, Phil and **Mike Ondecker**, Curator of the Collection of Classic Buses, started playing around with bus #1303 (Lorenz #99) which had been in storage at Newport. Throughout the winter, Phil literally resurrected that bus from the dead. Phil spent days on end all winter long working outside.

In January, **Stan Holter** of Richfield Bus Company offered us Richfield Bus #97, ex-Twin City Lines #1171. Born in 1953, #1171 was part of the same order of buses as #1399. Phil spent hours trying to get #1171 to run. Its engine was very good—#1171 was the bus that didn't smoke during Thomas. Everything else seemed to need work. In the mean time, Mike Ondecker secured a free engine rebuild for us. And then another one. (And recently, a third one.) Each of these would cost about \$10,000 in labor had we simply paid a diesel shop such as Interstate Diesel to fix it for us. So we changed course. No longer needing to sacrifice #1364 for its engine, we installed the rest of seats. Soon we had 3 buses running circles in the back lot. Dave Kettering worked through red tape at the Department of Motor Vehicles to get clear titles and license plates for the buses. Thanks in part to the generosity of Art Pew, insurance and parts for #1399's engine rebuild were bought. Lorenz Bus Service provided DOT inspections for the other buses and shop space for Bill's Tire to install new tires. MTM Classic Bus volunteers funded all of this work on the new buses out of their pockets. Except for transportation problems on the part of Shorty's, #1399 would probably have made its first appearance in two years at Thomas. But we did have three good buses. Two were scheduled to run. The third would act as back-up. The contract with the school bus company to run Thomas shuttles was greatly reduced in scope and cost.



The Railroad Division crew recently assembled this all Great Northern streamlined consist at Jackson Street. Front to back, it includes SD45 #400 (owned by the GN Ry. Historical Society), recently repaired and painted baggage car #265, coaches #1096, 1097 and 1213, recently repainted parlor car Twin Ports and business car #A-11. By the way, the two tracks at far left are the former passenger main line between Minneapolis and St. Paul. The vacant space next to them held the two freight tracks, since removed. It was Minnesota's only four track main line. Steve Glischinski photo.

Getting in Gear for Thomas

In the days leading to the event, Ken took turns putting #1364 and then #1303 through the paces by using them in lieu of his personal vehicle for a few days. If anything was going to break, we wanted it to break now, not during Thomas. A non-revenue trial event was scheduled whereby #1303 was going to run as one of the shuttle buses at Crystal Evangelical Free Church on Easter Sunday, the Sunday before the Thomas event. This was our opportunity to get standing loads on the bus as one final test to see how it responded in heavy service. On Good Friday Bill's Tire seated the last of the new tires on #1303. On that Saturday Lorenz finished its DOT inspection. Late Saturday night at Lorenz, ads were taken out of #1364 and placed into #1303 (which had none—we hadn't yet finished the Museum ads each of the buses now have). Six new tires that were sitting inside of #1303 for use on another bus were placed inside #1364. Still officially in testing mode and so that he would have it for the Easter event, Ken took the bus home with him that night. Only it didn't make it that far. At 1 AM Easter morning on its way from Lorenz, #1303 blew the curbside rear bellows-part of the air suspension. These had been inspected carefully, so the rupture was unexpected. After a late night phone call to Phil, the bus was

limped back to Lorenz. And thus mere hours later the newly revived Classic Bus Department ran its first event in two years.

The day after our trial event, **Scott Peiffer** of Lorenz Bus Company had to break and replace 24 rusted bolts to change the bellows on #1303. Scott noted scuff marks on the side of the bellows and presumed that in #1303's previous life someone must have ran the bus too many times before waiting for the bellows to fully inflate, causing the tires to run against it. While this was going on, Bill from Bill's Tire finished installing tires on another bus. The whole week before the Thomas event Phil continued the same practice he had all winter: practically living at JSRH to work on buses. A leveling valve, which Phil had rebuilt himself, brought the air system on #1171 up to spec. #1171 had the least hours being test driven, so it became the back-up bus. Ken's sister **Jennifer Eckert** shuttled him to Lorenz to pick up #1303 and return it to JSRH. Later his sister **Stephanie Luebeck** aided in picking up #1364. Printing trouble at Kinko's in Roseville that had been hampering progress for days was finally worked out. The result? Large interior ads produced by ourselves, custom to each bus, to promote the Museum and educate about the buses. Interior painting continued until nearly the last day.



Thomas the Tank engine at Jackson Street featured tents full of merchandise and other attractions. John Prestholdt photo.

Thomas the Tank Engine

Notwithstanding this year's poor financial showing, Thomas provided the Classic Bus Division the opportunity to show the Museum what we can do. With several large events coming our way in 2004, we feel the buses can be one of the things that set our museum apart.

None of the other drivers were available the first Friday, so Phil and Ken drove all day. Thanks to **Scott Heiderich** for unexpected relief driving and a meal break. This was the day the Thomas train hit the ground. #1303 ran an emergency run to rescue the passengers. Later #1364 rescued the crew of the derailed train. **Steve Smith**, the representative from Gullane (the firm who owns Thomas) seemed impressed with how fast the Museum recovered from the incident. Yet, on the way back from the derailment site, #1303 blew out the bellows we had just replaced the previous Monday. Leaning heavily to the right, it returned the train passengers to the front gate and then heads in for repair. **Mike Ondecker** fired up #1171 within five minutes—but we had just used up our spare on the first day of the event. We also found a flat inner dual tire on #1303. It appeared that the flat had rubbed on

the bellows. As Phil and Ken finished the last few trips of the day, Mike began working on solutions for #1303.

In a quick phone call to **Scott Peiffer** of Lorenz Bus Service, Scott talked Phil through the procedure for changing out a bellows. Seeing as this bellows had just been replaced, we would have an easier task of it—none of the bolts would be rusted tight. J.D. of C & J Shops, one who is known around the country for his knowledge of bus repair, told us that **Stan Holter** of Richfield Lines has a key to C & J's parts room. Even though Stan had been so ill he had stayed home from work that day, he joined us as we walked into the closed C & J Shops and picked up two bellows. We also picked up Richfield #181, a new-look GM bus for use as a back-up just in case something else broke before we got #1303 running again. Stan told us to simply "fill it up when you're done." Beginning early the next morning, Phil and Mike began work on the bellows. Bill's Tire attended to the flat. The valve stem had been blocked in the wheel. Once freed, the tire held air. We never could explain why the tire on #1303 had gone flat. It was new, showed no sign of damage, and is still holding air today.

The bus ran for one hour that Saturday before rupturing the same bellows again. Perplexed, we considered several possible causes and solutions. Finally, Phil measured the insets of each of the wheels and found that the wheel on the inside dual is the wrong size, causing the tire to be inset too much. Why did it drive successfully for days in testing with the wrong wheel? Presumably the load of passengers was just heavy enough to compress the bellows slightly more than when the bus was empty. Beyond that, the new tires being unworn, had a wider wear surface. And the tire grazed the bulge of the bellows. So after changing the bellows a third time, we reversed the wheels on #1303. This was temporary—the curbside wheels now protruded out from the bus 1 inch beyond the side of the bus. But we were rolling. Nearly midnight Saturday, we finally left JSRH. Upon checking all of the buses, we found a random assortment of wheel insets scattered throughout our fleet and spent much of the off time between the weekends sorting this out.

Nearly every day we had something small go wrong. Being run several days in a row after years of sitting idle, the



Thomas pulling the trains full of families, handcar rides, and the seldom seen streetcar mockup. John Prestholdt photos.



engine compartments loosened up. #1171 started leaking transmission fluid. Then it developed a small fuel leak. Nearly all of these were fixed after hours. We had a total of three flat tires during the course of the event. The last of these was obviously caused by the 3-inch bolt puncturing the tread. And all of these on new tires! After the third flat, we walked the entire route to pick up junk. When we were done, our box overflowed with bolts, pop cans, other miscellaneous metal pieces.

Where do we go from here?

The buses are an odd kind of Museum equipment. After all, what other piece of our collection can be driven home with you? While we might not be doing as much driving the buses home with us any more, they do need a certain amount of running just to stay mechanically sound. We can go anywhere. We'd like to carve out a niche for ourselves earning revenue by bringing patrons to other venues. We'll be recruiting more volunteers this summer. We have some challenges ahead too. We have three engine rebuilds available and a free paint job in the pipeline. Though the engine rebuilds are indeed worth about \$10,000 apiece as a donation and will give us several years of trouble free performance, we need about \$2000 per bus in parts to secure the donated labor. Only one of these is paid for as of press time. We think we have a better insurance deal in the works—\$1000 less per bus than what we are running on this year. We'll still need to find some working capital for ourselves so we can afford to begin operations next year. We need some space. (Many thanks to JSRH for our current "shops"!) As the buses start getting paint and bodywork done, inside space at a bus garage would be real handy. Now that we are a separate division of the Museum, the bylaws call for us to have representation on the Board. Finally, we need to convert our great potential into hard dollars of revenue. So our work truly is cut out for us. But consider us a year ago. No working buses. No revenue. Only three active volunteers. Now we have four buses, a network of suppliers and friends throughout the bus world who will do whatever it takes to help us, a growing pool of volunteers, and increasing revenues.

Where will the Classic Bus Division be a year from now? Time will tell. If the past year's extraordinary growth is any sign, then we think you'll like it.

RAILROAD DIVISION REPORT

-Dick Kolter

Late winter activities for the Railroad Division at the roundhouse found most efforts aimed, in one way or another, toward the Thomas the Tank Engine event. Thomas was present the last weekend in April and the first one in May. Preparations involved getting the rail yard ready and cleaning up the roundhouse to make it more presentable. Switching of the cars in the Jackson Street Yard took two Saturdays with two crews working each day. A total of seventy five individual switch moves were made to get the cars to be used for the Thomas train into position, and all others out of the way. The lack of free space in the yard, especially since some equipment was brought in from the arsenal, made the switching a very arduous and time consuming chore. Everything was completed on time and Thomas had room to operate.

With Thomas needing two weeks for preparations, and another two weeks to operate, the Railroad Division maintenance staff lost valuable time for getting things ready of the annual spring trek to Osceola. All of the equipment went as scheduled, even though a few jobs had to be completed at Osceola. Again this year Railroad Division volunteers played an important part in the Thomas event with train operation, of course, being their primary focus. Each day found two shifts for the operating crew, which usually consisted of an engineer, conductor, brakeman, and station master plus car hosts. Car hosts came from all of the museum's divisions.

During all of the switching for Thomas, **Kurt Mahre** observed that all of our equipment painted in the Great Northern colors was present in one location. Since this is unlikely to happen again for several years, he suggested a photo be taken of these cars along with the similarly painted locomotive Great Northern #400. Number 400, also known as the "Hustle Muscle", belongs to Great Northern Historical Society and is housed at Jackson Street. Kurt arranged for professional rail photographer **Steve Glischinski** to do the job.

The spring trip to Osceola took place on May 6 with three locomotives, seven coaches, and a caboose in the consist. The route from Jackson Street was on the BNSF through Park Junction to University-Shoreham. Then after a

short delay it went on over the CP, through New Brighton, to Withrow. Withrow to Osceola found the train on familiar track and an arrival in Osceola late in the afternoon.

The first operating day of the season occurred just a few days later with a Mother's Day brunch train that sold out two complete trips. Another pre season event in the middle of May was a new advertising event called Media Day. All area news people were sent information and invited to come for a train ride to see what our operation was all about. We hope that the additional awareness will help future passenger counts. **Nick Modders** organized the event.

Regular season operations began on Memorial Day weekend May 24 with the highlight of the weekend being eighty passengers getting on the train at the state park and riding to Osceola. Brunch trains this year have been expanded to two per month and have been attracting a respectable number of passengers.

A two mile section of the track that we operate on was constructed by cutting into the limestone bluffs on the edge of the St. Croix River. The remaining rock forms a steep wall of stone adjacent to the track that is susceptible to crumbling. On Friday the thirteenth of June a sizable quantity of rock broke loose and fell onto the track rendering it impassable. Work crews could not come to remove the rock until the following Monday so the weekend trains of June 14 and 15 were left with only the option of traveling to Dresser.

Of course the normal Dresser trip would not be affected by this problem, but the two Marine trips are scheduled to go farther and last longer. Since there is about two miles of track beyond the point in Dresser where we normally turn around, it was quickly decided that we would run to the end of the track with the two trips that would have gone to Marine. This offered the passengers reasonable substitute scenery, and more time on the train. Without a siding at the end of the track, it became necessary for the train to shove back. Shoving out was not a problem because the rear car was A-11, which has a bell, whistle, light, and brake control.

It has been over ten years since the Railroad Division ran trains over track that we actually had to maintain. There is a short spur track, on the north side of the depot at Osceola, where we store our equipment, which does not get maintained by our host railroad. This

particular track is owned by the Osceola Historical Society and we use it as part of our lease to use the depot, which they also own. The historical society is not able to maintain the track, so if we want it to be safe we will have to take care of it. An inspection revealed the many ties needed replacement, especially on the curve at the entrance to the track. On May 31 a group of volunteers turned out to replace all the rotted ties on the cured portion of the track from the switch to the derail. Most of the work was done by hand, except for driving the spikes, which was done with a compressed air device, similar to a jack hammer. Participating in the work were **Tavis Anderson, Keith Skeivik, Mike Matson, Dick Kolter, Larry Kytola, Jon VanNiewall, and Chris Olson**. More ties will be replaced on the straight section of track at a later date, when it can be organized.

A new feature in our operation this year is an internet ticket purchasing system that has been developed by **Dan Lamatsch**. Potential customers can view our web site and immediately purchase tickets, if they so desire. The first few weekends of the season did see a number of people purchase tickets this way each day. One group of people from St. Louis used this system. This online ticketing is part of our business plan for this year which includes a much expanded attempt at marketing. **Dan and Pat Kytola** have also been working on more extensive advertising on radio and in newspapers. Pat has also distributed many discount coupons that, when used, will give us a better idea of where most of our customers come from.

GN Drovers Coach #757

-Bill Graham

Perhaps the finest example of a wooden passenger coach in MTM's collection is the former Great Northern drovers' car No. 757, acquired the car in 2001 as a donation from **Jack Hoover**. Displayed on a bulkhead in the car is a letter to Hoover from J.F. Likarish, General Car Superintendent, Car Department, Great Northern Railway, dated May 28, 1963. Likarish recited the car's history: that the Barney & Smith Car Company delivered it to the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway on June 29, 1893, that it was a first-class coach having natural oak woodwork and a Baker car heater, that it carried the Manitoba Road number 26 and that the company paid \$5,357.61 for it. The Great Northern Railway assumed



The interior of drover coach #X-757 is surprisingly complete and ornate. Note the Pinsch gas light fixtures and the stenciled woodwork. Bill Graham photos.

control of the Manitoba in 1898 and assigned the new road number 145 to the coach on February 3, 1900. It was downgraded to a second class coach with the road number 3225 in 1908 after the GN's "Oriental Limited" received new equipment. The car received an electric lighting system in July, 1926, with the new road number 568. It was downgraded to a cattle drovers' coach



on April 26, 1930, with the road number x-757. A steel underframe finally was applied to the car at Jackson Street Shops on April 30, 1932. For the next 29 years, it ran on prairie branchlines until it was retired from GN roster in 1961.

Jack paid the Great Northern for a special move of the 757 and a retired 3-truck Shay locomotive to the nearest railhead, from where he trucked the pieces to his ranch outside Belt, Montana. There on a hillside out on the prairie, he and his wife Karen, picked, scraped, washed, painted and fiddled with the coach for the next 28 years. Without electricity, the Hoovers had to do all their work by hand. When Jack saw that his time with the 757 was approaching an end, he was pleased to learn that MTM would happily place it in the Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul, the former home base of both the Manitoba and the Great Northern Railways.

Masterful Conservation and Restoration

On June 24, Jack and Karen visited Jackson Street to see the coach and discuss its further restoration by MTM. With MTM staffer **Chris Olson, John and Marilyn Thomas** of the Great Northern Historical Society and me asking questions, Jack led a tour of the car to explain the work he had done on it.

Jack aimed his restoration work toward conserving and restoring the 757's authentic condition. He obtained brass fittings from similar retired GN coaches, but he installed them in the 757 only when the attachment screws matched existing holes in the woodwork. He conserved the elaborate decorations on ceiling panels by dry-scraping away the layers of gray enamel, a huge undertaking that required great patience and a strong back. He determined that the extensively carved oak woodwork had not been finished with stain, and he applied a natural color finish that left visible the scuffs and screw holes for future restorationists to ponder. The partition that divides the two compartments is not original but had been installed when the car was converted for service as a cattle drovers' accommodation. The cowboys had not been kind to it, painting a target and using the partition for knife-throwing contests to help the time pass. Jack left the partition in place because it is part of the 757's story.

The Hoovers restored and reupholstered several original walk-over seats in handsome red velvet to

match their original look. Jack obtained bronze chandelier ceiling lamps that give 757 the glorious look of railroading's Gilded Age. In one lavatory, he installed an antique, dry hopper toilet made of white china with floral decorations embossed on its sides along with a large, kerosene wall lamp. Jack repaired and refinished the wooden louver window shades using parts of shades recovered from other retired coaches. Overall, the 757's interior looks like a well-done restoration easily presentable to museum visitors, thanks to Jack's and Karen's fine efforts.

To help the 757 survive the elements on the Montana prairie, Jack covered the roof with rolled, tarpaper roofing which he carefully tucked and tacked around the clerestory and eaves. This roofing protected the original ceiling of oak veneer plywood from water damage. Jack then made what looks like a suit of armor for the sides and ends, painstakingly fitting and piecing sheet steel which he screwed to the letter boards, window mullions, belt rails and sides. Painted in oxide red, the coach looks like a steel coach from a distance. Jack assured us that significant wood rot has invaded parts of the roof and belt rail, and that at least one of the end sills might resemble Swiss cheese.

MTM to Begin Restoration Soon.

MTM's committee on collections and restorations recommended a budget and restoration plan for the 757 which will prepare it for static display inside Jackson Street Roundhouse. The work will begin as soon as funds are available. After the tarpaper and sheet metal jacketing are removed, MTM'ers will assess the condition of the roof and belt rail to determine how much must be replaced. The work will use original materials from the car as much as possible, including the letterboards and wainscoating along the sides. The old paint will be stripped by hand one coat at a time in order to find and conserve original colors, road numbers and initials.

Besides the handsome kerosene chandeliers, Jack obtained original door latches, seven ornate bronze coat hooks, window pulls and two striking original luggage racks. The racks have elaborate fan-shaped end brackets supporting a basket of bronze wire netting. MTM will try to supplement these with appropriate lavatory fixtures and car heaters taken from the collection. The main items still to be procured are more luggage racks and coat hooks, ticket

clips and the rest of a set of walk-over seats. Finishing the restoration of GN 757, actually "Manitoba No. 26," will be another interesting and fun project for MTM'ers who like to work on very old artifacts. Any Museum member who wants to get his or her hands dirty while learning about wooden passenger cars should call **Bill Graham**, 952-435-9724.

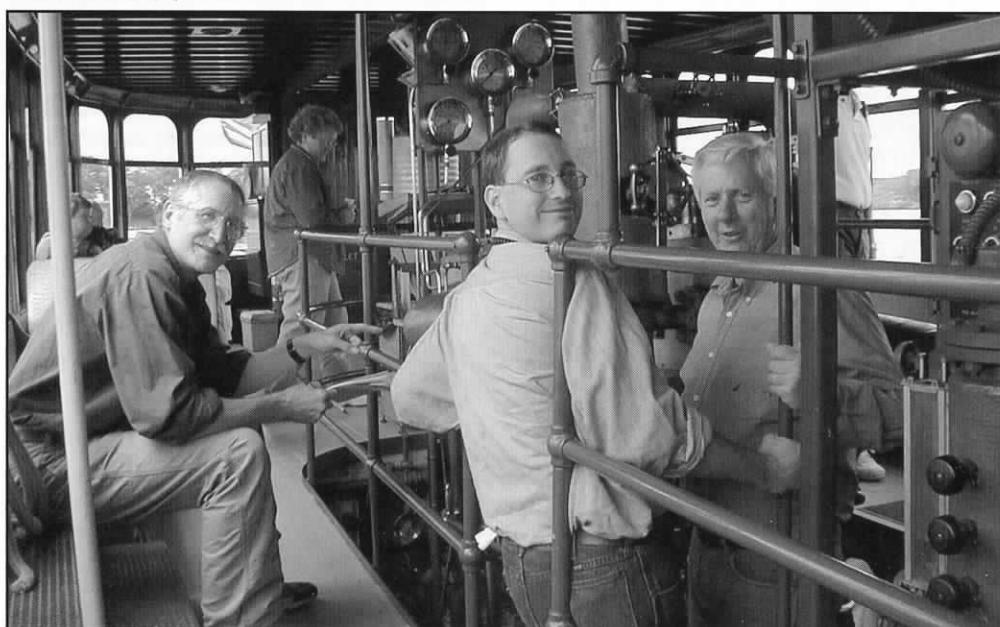
LAKE MINNETONKA DIVISION REPORT

Minnehaha Maintenance and Launch

Late Spring saw the completion of steamboat maintenance, including the finishing touches on the installation of new PA speakers by volunteer Chuck Rud and the painting of the PFD box by volunteer **Bob Johnson** and staff member **Christopher Olson**.

Minnehaha's launch on May 10th went well, even with a one-hour delay from getting stuck in mud on the marine railway. Many people made this difficult endeavor a success including **Brad Buxton**, **Leo Eiden**, **Jim Hewett**, **Bob Johnson**, **Jack Kegel**, **Mike Kramer**, **Mike McWilliams**, **John Petronek**, **Clarence Rud**, **Chuck Rud**, **Kerm Stake**, **Ann Merriman**, and **Christopher Olson**. Once again the LMD's winter efforts to maintain the steam engine and boiler were rewarded with a quick start-up at launch. Continued efforts to preserve Minnehaha's hull by enclosing all below-the-waterline timbers in a humidity chamber proved very successful as her seams swelled up quickly and the bilge pumps were not over-worked. Minnehaha steamed to her home dock within three hours of her launching.

Staff member Christopher Olson (middle) with new engineers Peter Skoro (left) and Terry Burns operate the steam engine and boiler on a GEAR Cruise the summer. Ann Merriman photo.



Engineering Classes

Bill Berger conducted his extremely helpful and informative steam classes this Spring with several new volunteer attendees. Bill's expertise and knowledge are incalculable and greatly enhance the understanding of Minnehaha's boiler and its workings. Steam class attendees include **Steve Hack**, **Roger Libra**, **John Magnuson**, **Tom Sovereign**, **Peter Skoro**, and **Jack Swensen**.

Minnehaha's Operating Season

This season the LMD is offering a one-hour cruise on Wednesday afternoon to accommodate the tour company MetroConnections. Minnehaha is featured in the MetroConnections brochure and the company picks up riders at the Mall of America.

MetroConnections patrons also get a ride on Streetcar #78 and a tour of the car barn to complete their experience. This afternoon trip has been very successful so far, with many other large groups taking advantage of this new weekday cruise.

The 2003 Give 'Em A Ride (GEAR) Program is in full swing, with several deserving non-profit groups taking advantage of this free steamboat ride sponsored by a museum member. Groups of senior citizens with limited means or mobility, developmentally disabled adults, city kids, and victims of physical and emotional abuse have enjoyed a break from their troubles with an educational and relaxing steamboat ride.



Foreman Robert Johnson welcomes riders from tour company MetroConnections aboard Streetcar #78. MetroConnections brings visitors from the Mall of America to Excelsior to ride the Minnehaha and Streetcar #78 nearly all summer.

Ann Merriman photo.

New Volunteers

Many new volunteers joined the LMD ranks this season, especially in the engineering department. Currently under-going on-the-water training with our experienced engineers are **Terry Burns, Steve Hack, John Magnuson, and Peter Skoro**. New volunteer **Dan Edeen** has taken to piloting the Minnehaha very quickly, with several expert landings under his belt before the season began, and we welcome back Captain **Sal Mondelli**, after a two-year absence. New purser **Bob Higgins** is also a very welcome edition to the ranks, since new pursers are much needed. New Ticket Office volunteers include **Phyllis Burns, Muriel Irwin, Dolores Kelly, and Darlene Nelson**. We welcome back **Charly Oliver and Nan Woodburn** to the Ticket Office ranks after absences of a few years. New Streetcar #78 operators include **Wendy Dunham, and Dr. Bruce Kobs**. We also welcome back **Linda Saveraid** after a year's absence from streetcar operations.

Donations

The LMD recognizes several donors who continue to support our efforts with monetary donations during the operating season. Many thanks go to **Thomas Brossard, Dr. David Parupsky, Bill Anderson** and the Chamberlain-



GEAR Program participant Cindy from the Orono Woodlands Group Home enjoys her birthday celebration with a turn at Minnehaha's helm while Captain Bob Johnson supervises. Note Cindy's great birthday cake hat. Ann Merriman photo.



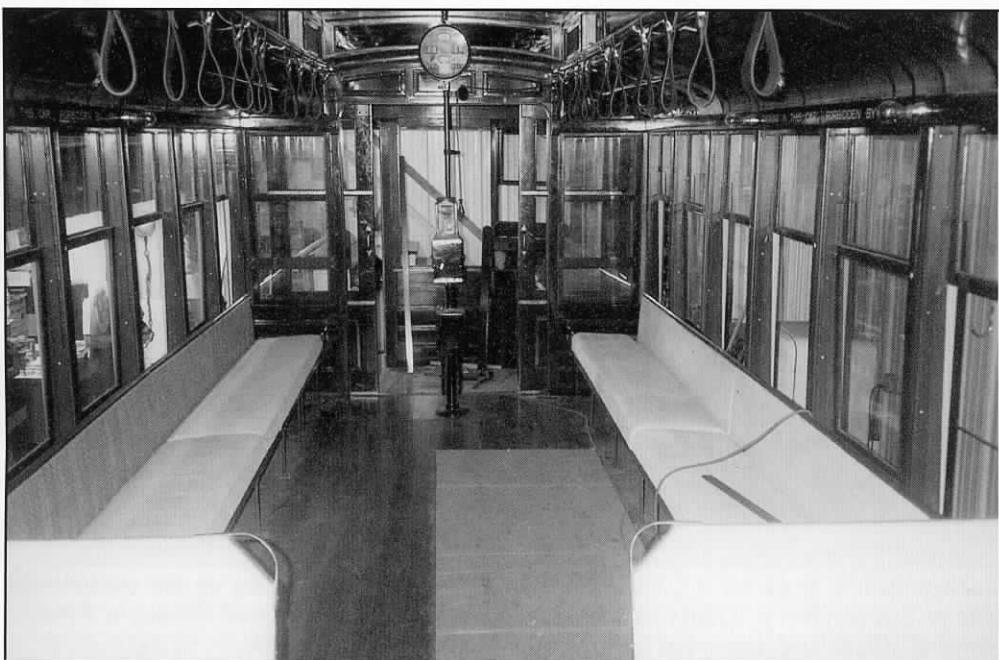
The GEAR Program serves many kids from Minneapolis schools throughout the summer, like this group enjoying the lake from Minnehaha's upper deck. Ann Merriman photo.

Goudy VFW Post No. 5113 of Mound, and **Annette Marie Poeschel** and the Intercongregation Communities Association.

A recent in-kind contribution of five vintage personal flotation devices from the boat **Vagabond** was greatly appreciated. **Vagabond** was constructed by the Royal Moore Boat Works in 1916 for river service and had a torpedo stern like **Minnehaha**. **Dick Noland** of Wayzata, who once owned the boat, donated these objects to the LMD along with a great newspaper article about

the **Vagabond's** return to Lake Minnetonka in 1968. These life jackets are currently on display, along with a copy of the article, in the LMD office. **Vagabond's** fate is unknown. Many thanks to Mr. Noland for his generosity and interest in history.

Another in-kind donation of three original tracings of the streetcar boat **Excelsior** and tug **Hercules** was accepted from member **Gordon Geddes** of Poplar Grove, IL. The tracings include the elevations and sections of both vessels in extreme



Car #1239 is nearing completion at the Excelsior car barn. The interior seats have all been installed. Note the differences from #1300 and #265. Because #1239 is a gate car with entry and exit only at the rear, it has double-length longitudinal (aisle-facing) seats in the rear and none in the front. The rear steps have been painted and installed, and await the gates. Aaron Isaacs photos.

detail. From a manuscript standpoint these types of documents are priceless and greatly enhance the LMD's collection of original documents. The LMD must thank Mr. Geddes for his generosity, member **Norman F. Podas** of Grand Marais for facilitating the donation, and volunteer **Russell Olson** for presenting the plans to us.

A third in-kind contribution of a large photo of the employees of the Lake Street Streetcar Station in 1921 arrived unannounced in the mail. This



20 by 24" mounted photo depicts a few hundred streetcar operators, their station, and four photos of different types of streetcars that includes one with a snowplow attached to the front. This photo joins the LMD's other photo of this type, a much smaller version of the "31st Streetcar Station Railway Trainmen" from June 1904. Many thanks are given to **Karolyn King** of Eau Claire, WI for this generous donation and for her foresight in thinking of us.

Lastly, volunteer **Clarence Rud** just delivered an original 45-star American flag, the same type of flag that would have flown on Minnehaha during her first years of operation.

Due to the age of the flag, it will not fly on Minnehaha, but will greatly enhance the LMD's collection of vintage and antique articles. We express our sincerest thanks to Clarence and his wife Donna for entrusting us with this historically significant object.

Minnehaha's regular operating schedule has proven successful, with brisk sales and many advanced reservations. Several large groups are scheduled throughout the season, and many cruises have sold out early in the season scheduled throughout the early season sold out.

Media Attention

Minnehaha was featured on a KARE-11 News "Gopher Getaway" segment in early June. KARE-11 reporter **John Croman** and photojournalist **Ron Stover** came along with the crew and 83 passengers on a Wednesday afternoon cruise around Big Island. was included in this feature along with Minnehaha Fall, Fort Snelling, and Stillwater's town tours. LMD thanks John and Ron for thinking of us and participating in our first Wednesday afternoon cruise of the season, Minnehaha may be included in a series of books, exhibits, documentaries, and publicity centering around a project called "AMERICA 24/7: A Digital Time Capsule May 12-18, 2003." According to **Kim Shannon**, Director of Photograph Relations for AMERICA 24/7, it is a visual time capsule of American life during a specific one-week time period. Star Tribune staff photographer **Carlos Gonzalez** came aboard Minnehaha and photographed her volunteers training for the upcoming season. LMD hopes Minnehaha and her crew will be included in this project and many thanks are extended to **Linda Murrell** of the Excelsior Area Chamber of Commerce and **Chris Foote** of Lake Minnetonka.com for suggesting Minnehaha's inclusion in this project.



Leo Meloche, former General Superintendent of the LMD, graciously donated a framed and enlarged facsimile of the January 12, 1892 issue of the Minneapolis Tribune to the LMD. Leo purchased this piece from the **Goodrich Lowry** estate in Wayzata. The issue features a front page article about "A Complimentary Banquet to Thomas Lowry" with a large sketch of the TCRT President. The LMD extends thanks to Leo for this wonderful gift which is on display in the office.

TRACK WORKER FOR THE STREETCAR COMPANY

-Milo Harpstead

A rather short, but defining, period in my life was the five months that I worked as a section hand for the streetcar company in the Twin Cities. When I graduated from Wilmot High School in Wilmot, SD in the spring of 1948, I was determined to go to college at what was then South Dakota State College in Brookings but I wanted to earn some real cash first. There was never enough income from our farm to cover much more than living expenses for my parents, especially since my father was well past retirement age by that time. I had earned some money during the harvest season, but not enough to pay the cost of college. Kenney Minder, one of my classmates held a similar view so, in the late afternoon of October 31st we boarded the Greyhound bus in Ortonville, MN on our way to Minneapolis to seek our fortune.

Finding a job was not easy and we had no idea how to do it. We walked from door to door asking if they were interested in hiring us. We had about the same level of success as telemarketers,

except that it took us a lot longer to cover the territory. This went on for several days, and we were becoming anxious

Our big break came quite by chance when we boarded a nearly empty streetcar in mid-afternoon after having been turned away once again at some business place. On some lines the streetcars had both a motorman and a conductor, and this one had a conductor with plenty of time to talk. Maybe he was perceptive enough to have our plight figured out because he asked us what we were doing. After hearing about our hopes and disappointments he said, "Why don't you try Twin City Rapid Transit (TCRT); they are almost always hiring."

He told us about their offices and yard at University and Snelling in St. Paul, so that is where we headed the next morning. Our interviewer had a standard form that he filled out as he talked to us. It may seem strange today, but in 1948 one of the questions was "nationality." That did not necessarily mean citizenship but rather, "Where did your forefathers come from?" I answered, "Norwegian" and that was okay. Kenney answered, "American." The response was "Ya, well, oh, okay." The interviewer offered each of us a job as section hands with TCRT and we were to start at an assigned time and place a couple of days later.

We waited until we landed a job before we looked for a place to live. For this task we must have searched the classifieds, because I do not remember going from house to house. We knocked on the door at 3852 11th Ave. South and were received graciously by an elderly lady named Mrs. Roan. We were shown the upstairs bedroom that she had for rent. It had a closet, one double bed, and a couple of chairs. In those days the

A track crew has dug up the cobblestones on at 3rd Street and Hennepin Avenue.
MTM collection.

lack of separate beds did not matter much, because in most families there was usually more than one child assigned to a bed. The location of our housing was fortuitous, because it was a scant four blocks from the streetcar stop at 38th and Chicago Ave. From there we could make good connections to any place in the Twin Cities. Another advantage it had was that Smiley's Restaurant was on 38th just a short distance east from the intersection. The proprietor/cook was Charlotte Nelson who went by the nickname Smiley. She had been widowed at a young age. She had operated streetcars as a motorman/conductor during WWII.

For our first day of work, we reported to the Snelling Avenue Station, as directed. The man who had interviewed us took us in his car to our work location. He introduced us to the crew foreman, George Roko, and thus our adventure began. George maintained a proper aloofness, but later we were told by one of the older members of the crew that he liked to get farm boys because they knew how to work. Sometimes there was a delay in getting a delivery that was vital to the job, so the crew was left with nothing meaningful to do while we waited. George could never be sure when the inspector might make a surprise visit, so he asked us to always have some kind of a tool in our hand and act busy.

As employees of TCRT, Kenney and I had free passes on the streetcars. Our usual schedule was to get up early, eat breakfast at Smiley's, and take the streetcars to wherever our crew was assigned to work that day. We got to work by 8 a.m. Right from the beginning we had to learn the routes

and use the timetables effectively. At the end of a workday, George would tell us where to be the next morning. It could be anywhere with streetcar service in Minneapolis and sometimes in St. Paul. We handled this well and never arrived at the tool shack late.

A section hand crew consisted of about 12 men, but the number varied as men were hired, fired, or just quit for whatever reason. I never knew of anybody to be fired by our foreman, but sometimes a pink slip was sent down from the head office for reasons unknown to us.

At the work site, there was a tool shack on wheels where we gathered each morning. When any of us entered, everybody exchanged "Good mornings" and took a seat on the tool chests along the side. One of the crew, Vern, would always respond to our greetings with "Yes sir." George took this until one morning he said, "Why can't you say, "Good morning" like everybody else?" From then on, he did. At 8 a.m. George would say, "Time to go to work boys." Our most common job was to tear out old track that had been worn thin by the braking and acceleration of streetcars, but there were other jobs.

After a few days when it looked as though weren't going to quit right away, we were presented with a form for joining the Transit Workers Union. That was sort of a turn around for South Dakota farm boys but we did not hesitate to join. No doubt the union had been instrumental in getting us a starting salary of \$1.04/hour. After a couple of months, that went up to \$1.12/hour. One of the old timers once told me what conditions had been like when he started with TCRT. In those days some foremen had no respect for the workers and, for example, there was nothing the worker could do about being cursed unmercifully.

The other old timers for whom being a section hand was a lifetime career were Mitch Rollins, John Yulric, and Matt Bartko. George Roko the foreman, Mitch, and John were immigrants from what was then Czechoslovakia. Matt was from Poland. Many, if not most, of the old timers in the track maintenance section were Czechs and some of theirs sons had professional jobs with the company. Among themselves they spoke Czech, but they spoke English quite well too. All of those who I met were fine gentlemen who gave a day's work for a day's pay. They were family men, and most of them lived in north Minneapolis.

Our night watchman was a young fellow named Gene. I would not have liked to have his job. Much of the time we had the street torn up so the watchman had to light the flares and put up barricades to protect the traffic from running into our holes. Our tools would have been stolen if there was no guard. He also kept a fire in the little potbellied stove in the tool shack that was our shelter and a place to warm up on really cold days. He must have been paid for 16 hours per day, because that is how long he was on duty. He probably napped some of the time. It must have been a boring job. Gene told me that during the night he would walk around the work area from time to time, and, according to him, the flares and barricades were not enough to keep careless people from driving into our holes at night. Apparently with some pushing and tugging, the errant car could usually be extracted.

Two of the other members of our crew were Al Carlson and a fellow named Vern. They had worked there for quite a while. The brothers Bud and Bill Perance were with us for a while. Bud was single and Bill was trying to become single again, so his 8 to 5 job was probably the best part of his day. There were five of us who were just out of high school or a year older. Jack Collins was from Minneapolis and was usually a good worker, but George got after him sometimes. Duane Olson was a farm boy from North Dakota. Kenney Minder, and Kenney's cousin, Donley Dickinson, who joined us after Kenney brought home good reports, and myself were the 19 and 20 year olds on the crew. Casey Jones was not a member of our crew, but he was the truck driver who provided us with supplies ranging from tools to sand. He drove a 1 ton Diamond T truck which ran well but had such heavy duty springs that it was hard on his back to drive it all day. Kenney and I were sometimes sent with him to help load materials.

Prior to our first day on the job we bought work clothes, but soon the weather turned colder and we had to improve our wardrobe. We found the solution to our discomfort in an army surplus store. During WWII, airplane crews did not have a heated environment so they were issued sheepskin boots, pants, and coats with the fleece in. We decked ourselves out in those boots and coats when it was cold, so we kept warm with the normal exercise demanded by the job. The only problem was that that clothing was not designed for walking farther than from

the airplane to the crew quarters. Zippers soon wore out and had to be replaced with string, and other signs of disrepair became evident. I can still remember some of the looks we received when we got on the streetcar in the morning as people wondered what sort of work those two slovenly characters did. The coldest day that I can recall working on the track all day was in downtown Minneapolis and it was -17 degrees at midday.

That winter we did not have much snow either. However, when there was snow, part of our job was to keep the switches free of ice. If there was a snow storm outside of the usual working hours a small crew was selected to ride around in the truck from switch to switch to keep them functioning. This was easy work with overtime pay but it went to selected people and the farm boys did not qualify.

The overhead wire was the source of current for the floodlights when we worked at night. I should interject here that we were given absolutely no safety precautions at any time. It was like working on the farm- the wise survive. Anyway the bulbs got power by hooking the end of the portable light pole onto the overhead wire. To make the ground there was an insulated wire with a large square steel nut on the end. When the nut was laid on the track, sparks flew and you got light. One time we had been working all night and we were all pretty tired. When the shift ended, I lifted the nut off the track by the insulated wire and, without thinking, I grabbed the nut with my gloved hand! Due to the fact that I was wearing gloves and my sheepskin boots, and I was not standing on the track, I just got a good jolt, but it could

George Roko, the track crew foreman, was from Czechoslovakia.





Here are the three of us farm boys from Wilmot, South Dakota. We were 18 or 19 years old. Left to right are Donley Dickison, Kenneth Minder and the author. The location is 38th and Chicago Avenue.

have been more serious. Like so many jobs in those days, danger was ever present. If better contact were made, I think survival would depend on having somebody there to quickly grab the insulated wire and pull the steel nut off the victim.

One of the circumstances that gave variation to our work was the type of material around and over the wooden ties. There were places where the track was not located in a roadway and earthen material over the ties was not required. It was like regular railroad track. The downtown streets and other thoroughfares had cobblestones even with the top of the rails. Picks and shovels were our most frequently used tools, but breaking up cobblestone streets was made easier with air hammers. Air pressure was supplied by a portable compressor on a trailer that was towed by truck to the work site. Air hammers have not changed much through the years. They were, and still are, a beast to operate. We normally switched off about every 15 minutes during steady hammering. The one good thing about that job was that it would really warm the operator on a cold day.

The cobblestones were like a squared off large loaf of bread had been hewed from granite. They were about 7 to 8 inches wide and high and varied in length from about 8 to 12 inches. Each face was more or less flat. Those that were shaped to butt up against the inside of the rail had an "L" cut out for the

flangeway of the rail to run in. These stones were put in a separate pile because a fixed number of them would be needed for rebuilding the cobblestone surface. The others were just tossed into piles to be fairly handy when we were finishing the job.

During most repair jobs the track remained open for service or with only minor delays. We might have had to work very fast to get a new rail in place and temporarily secured so that the streetcar could role very slowly over it. Sometimes a couple of crews would work all night to have the track ready for use by morning.

Once the earthen material was removed the railroad spikes were pulled with a bar about 5 feet long with a claw on the end. The rails were lifted out/in with tongs. There was a man on each handle of a tong and the energy of several pair of men was required to lift a rail. The rails where the streetcars stopped and started were the weak link even though this rail may have been heavier than that used for the rest of the track.

New sections of track were put into place and spiked down. There were two spikes on each side of the rail and a new spike could not be put in a hole from where an old spike had been removed. A spiking mallet had a head about a foot long and the face of the head that contacted the spike was about one inch in diameter. It was the same on both ends. Driving spikes was a skill that did not necessarily come naturally. It was all

too easy to break the handle of the maul, much to the disgust of the foreman. He could not understand how farm boys who had driven fence posts could not drive spikes well. The problem, as I see it, was nerves. It was like an Olympic figure skater falling in front of a crowd on an element that he or she had done consistently in practice. Nevertheless, I did learn to do it fairly well. This means that I could stand opposite another spiker as we swung alternately, in sync, at a single spike. I was told that some trios of men could do this in rapid fire but I did not see that done.

The parts of a rail, in end view, are the ball (top surface), web (vertical), and base. Sections of rail were joined together with a steel splice called a joint bar on each side of the web. Two bolts were put through the splices and the web on each side of the joint. Rails were of a standard 39 foot length so in most applications the new rail fit into the space left by the old rail.

Where cobblestones were to be the finished surface, the hole was partially filled with one inch gravel followed by sand to act as a bed for the cobblestones. The stones were individually selected so the cracks between rows were offset. Especially when you were getting close to the bottom of the pile, you could not find a stone to fit the space that was open. This meant that you had to split or cleave a longer stone to get one the proper length. I think the hammer we used to do this was called a cleaving hammer. It had a head 7-8" long with a face about 1" by 3" on each end. In granite, the mineral grains are arranged randomly so the split does not depend upon the structure of the rock but rather on how the hammer strikes it. The handle of a cleaving hammer is about 20" long and was usually used while sitting on the ground with the stone between one's legs or by kneeling in front of the stone. One had to keep his eye on the spot where he wanted the stone to split and strike it hard with the squared edge of the hammerhead. It did not depend as much on one's strength as on the quickness of the blow delivered. I split many cobblestones, but it would have taken much more practice to become proficient at it.

The final step in finishing a rail replacement was to fill the cracks between the cobblestones. To do this we spread some sand over the surface and swept it around to partially fill the cracks. The final touch was to prepare thin (watery) concrete in a cement mixer and pour it over the surface from a wheel-barrow. This was swept around

to fill the cracks and after the concrete set the street looked good. A macadam surface was sometimes applied over the cobblestones.

On the outer ends of several lines the tracks occupied their own right of way. Unlike the wooden ties under the urban rails, those in private right of way were exposed to the weather. In this situation our work was just like that of a section hand on the railroad. Our work there mainly involved replacing ties and leveling track that had settled through the years. Even if service was not as frequent as on many other lines, it was important to keep that single line open with little or no interruption. The spikes were pulled from ties that were rotted, and the soil was dug away from the sides and ends of the ties. In this way the old tie could be slid out endwise. Sometimes it was easier to remove an individual tie by chopping in two to reduce the binding underneath. To compact the soil under the ties, crewmembers would work with spades on each side of the tie and force earthen material under the tie with a prying action.

I recall that one time our work involved replacing several ties and lifting the rail on a gentle curve. In this case one rail had to be higher than the other to provide superelevation so that the streetcar could take the curve safely at a higher speed. I went with Casey in the Diamond T to get a gauge from a warehouse to guide us in creating the slope. The gauge consisted of a board about 1" x 10" x 8'. It was tapered like a giant carpenter's handsaw. The taper was formed by a series of several steps. When a wider part of the board was placed on the lower (inside) rail and a narrower part was placed on the higher (outside) rail and the surface was level, as determined with a carpenter's level, the rail had a prescribed slope. Of course, the slope had to increase gently to its maximum and then level out gently for the straightaway. We used a jack to adjust the height of the rails. Stabilizing the slope was accomplished by cramming fine gravel under the ties with spades. The required slope, based on the sharpness of the curve, must have been prescribed in tables, and the proper gauge or gauges were selected from the warehouse to accomplish the specific task. TCRT had a civil engineer who checked up on some jobs and this was probably one of them.

In the case of streetcar tracks intersecting with railroad tracks, the standard length of rail could not be used. In this situation our rail had to be cut to make a good fit. The web and the

base of the rail could be cut with an acetylene torch, but the ball had to be cut by hand with a hack-saw. This was hard work, as was the drilling of two new holes in the web. Each hole was about one inch in diameter and was drilled by attaching a special apparatus to the rail and turning the bit with a ratcheted handle. The workman sat on the ground facing the handle, which he pulled it back and forth as on a rowing machine in a gym. It was essential to keep the surface being sawed or drilled well oiled.

My most memorable experiences with TCRT involved work where our tracks crossed railroad tracks. This was railroad property, so it was our responsibility to maintain both the streetcar and railroad lines. We worked for several days on Lake Street at Hiawatha Avenue near the Minneapolis Moline tractor factory. Our tracks on Lake Street ran east and west and the railroad tracks crossed Lake Street on a NW-SE diagonal. There were some sidetracks for the MM factory and other industries. Wherever two sets of tracks crossed there were grooves in the rails to accommodate the flanges of the wheels. This made for a lot of roughness and breakage of the tracks. Whenever a streetcar, a locomotive, or a train car went over this rough area it created quite a clatter.

The railroad operated a steam locomotive switch engine for moving cars on the sidetracks to and from the factories. Every time a locomotive came along we had to interrupt our work and get out of the way. A couple of days into the project I was sitting on the ground drilling a hole in the web of a rail when the switch engine blew its whistle. I looked over my left shoulder and saw that it was not on my track, but rather it was on the track to my left. If I leaned over and stretched out my arm I could touch that track. By this time, I was bored with getting up every time that switch engine came along, so I went on with my work. Apparently the engineer felt that I knew what I was doing, so he just continued on. As I was pulling on that drill, my mind drifted away from the locomotive. A moment later, its wheels hit the grooves in the rail and the clatter began. For one split second my protective instincts told me that the noise was arising from the rail I was working on, and I was about to die! My body just jerked; there was no time to move. Thank goodness for a strong young heart!

On another occasion we did a major rebuilding job at a railroad/streetcar

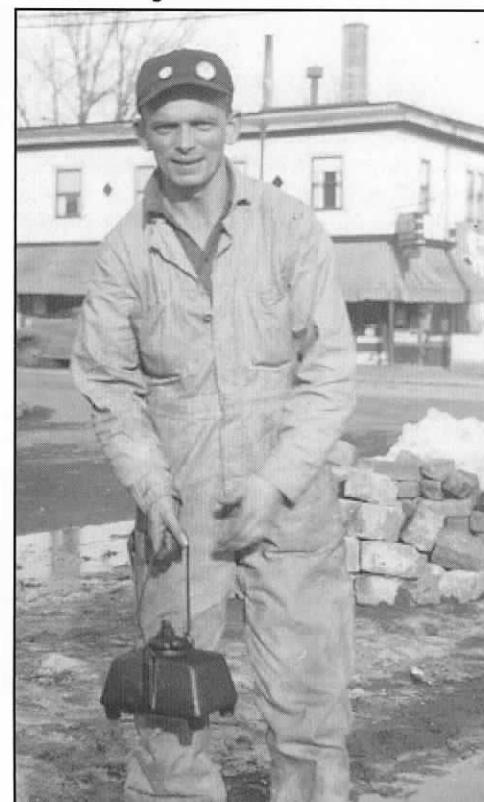


Mitch Rollens, also from Czechoslovakia.

grade crossing east of downtown Minneapolis. It was on the Great Northern line to St Paul. The first shift that I worked there was a night shift. I suppose it was an emergency job, because there was a broken rail that pivoted 2-3" like a teeter-totter when the train wheels rolled over it. I don't know just how far we were from the depot, but it was far enough so that a train could get up a pretty good head of steam by the time it reached our work area.

We had begun removing the earthen material from around the rails when a fancy Burlington locomotive came bearing down upon us much too fast. Of course, we had stepped off to the side. Our foreman, George, said something like, "That train is coming too fast! They have orders not to exceed 20 miles per hour." If we had been

Gene, the night watchman.





With the help of a crane car, the track crew lowers a new railroad crossing diamond into place. The location is Prior Avenue at Charles in St. Paul, where a Minnesota Transfer industrial spur crossed the Hamline-Cherokee line a block north of University Avenue. MTM collection.

prudent we would have run for our lives. George stood by the track, waved his arms, and yelled at the fireman who was leaning out the left side window as he looked down at the partially ripped up site that they were passing over. That broken rail rocked back and forth as the whole train passed without incident, but without slowing down either.

We dug out many cubic yards of earth and removed the old prefabricated crossing of the streetcar and railroad tracks. These were extremely heavy. Removal of the old section and replacing it with a new one was accomplished with the crane mounted on one of the company's work cars, essentially a flatbed streetcar. They must have been predrilled for quick deployment. The TCRT probably had duplicate units for every part of every railroad/streetcar intersection in town because I saw several of them stacked in a yard where the rails were stored. Each must have been fabricated for a specific location, because tracks commonly did not intersect at 90 degrees to one another.

Assuming that the work there went on around the clock, no individual crew was present to witness all phases of the project. I remember that the new track was installed before all the space under the track was filled in. This cavity was to be filled with one inch gravel. We young guys would fill our wheelbarrow and push it down a single rail as far as we could before it fell off the rail. It was a game to lighten our load. Wherever it fell the gravel was needed.

It was when we were doing the finishing on this intersection that a near tragedy developed right before our eyes. The tracks were functional, and an eastbound train came toward us. We got out of the way and stood on the south side of the tracks. A car came from the south and waited next to where we were standing. There were semaphore lights but no gate arms. As soon as the eastbound train passed the driver of the car immediately let out the clutch and crossed those double tracks. Unbeknown to any of us, a fast moving train was coming from the east and reached the intersection just as the car cleared the second set of tracks. We all realized what had almost taken place right in front of us! We wondered what must have gone through the mind of that impatient driver.

Most of our crew carried their lunch in a lunch box and ate in the tool shack. Our break was from 12 - 1 p.m. We young single guys usually did not carry our lunch. With our normal work schedule being 8 - 5, we would find a restaurant for lunch. Since we usually worked at car stops there were usually eating places in the area. The only fast food places there were at that time were the White Castles. I don't think that we were impressed with them, but they provided the food we needed for the afternoon. There were many other restaurants, and we got along fine most of the time. If our work was in a remote area, Jack Collins sometimes drove us to the nearest restaurant, because he didn't carry his lunch either.

The only time that I can remember eating in a really bad restaurant was when we had a comparatively short assignment to repair some track on Washington Avenue, about midway between Hennepin Avenue and Seven Corners. By that time, this area was degenerating into a slum district with lots of cheap bars and homeless people. There was a hole-in-the-wall restaurant not far from where we were working, so some of us went there for lunch on the first day at that site. It was a bar with a couple of tables with chairs. If they had a menu it was pretty short. I ordered a hamburger and what I got was something I haven't forgotten. The "meat" inside the bun was a slice of bread that had been dipped in something, maybe milk, so that some crumbled ground beef (or whatever) would stick to it to be fried. It didn't taste very good, but that was all there was for that day, and it tided me over until supper.

When spring came and it was getting close to planting time, I quit my job with TCRT and returned home. That spring, Dad seeded 20 acres of oats for me on the 40 acres of Indian land that he rented. It yielded well, and, together with my savings, I had plenty of money to start college at South Dakota State College. I have always been grateful for my experience as a section hand. It was a good break between high school and college.

THE BRYANT AVENUE MINNEHAHA CREEK BRIDGE

One of the last extensions of the Twin City streetcar system occurred in 1931, double track on Bryant Avenue South from 50th to 56th Streets. It would have been unremarkable, except for the need to cross the valley of Minnehaha Creek. The solution was this multi-arched concrete viaduct. In the process it passed above the south leg of Minnehaha Parkway and bisected the intersection of 53rd and Bryant. As an economy move, it was built one track wide, using the device known as gantlet track. The two tracks were interwoven, but not merged with switches. The result was four rails on the bridge, two southbound and two northbound, and separate trolley wires for each direction. The bridge survived for many years after abandonment in 1953, and was removed in the 1980s. The adjacent pedestrian bridge is still there. All photos MTM collection unless noted.



The bridge newly built in 1931.
Norton & Peel photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.



At 53rd Street the rails divided and once again became conventional double track. The end of the bridge can be seen in the distance.



The northern approach to the bridge shows how the rails interwove to become gantlet track. Both photos were taken during a Minnesota Railfans excursion.





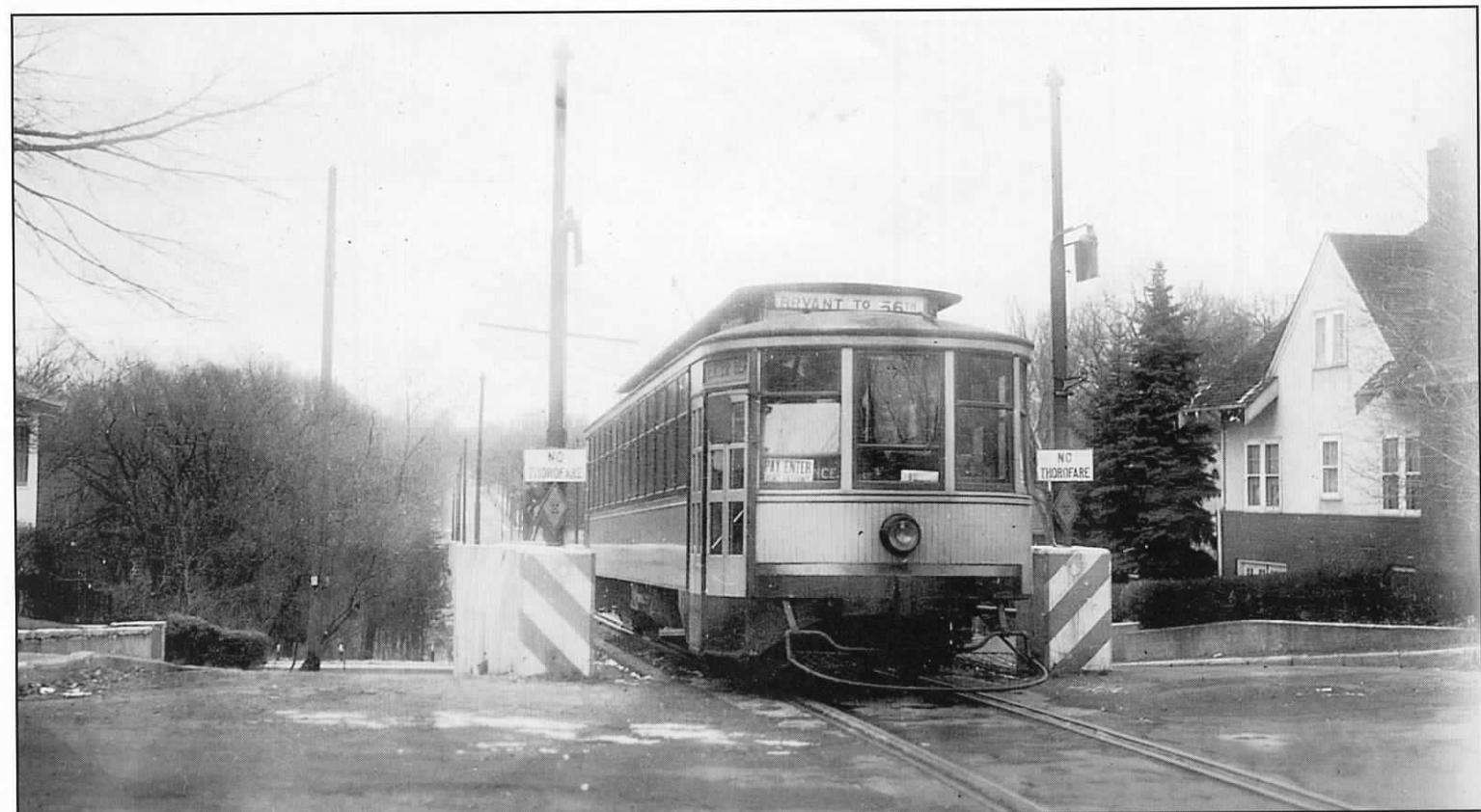
Kirt Blewett stood on the ped bridge and looked south at a northbound car.

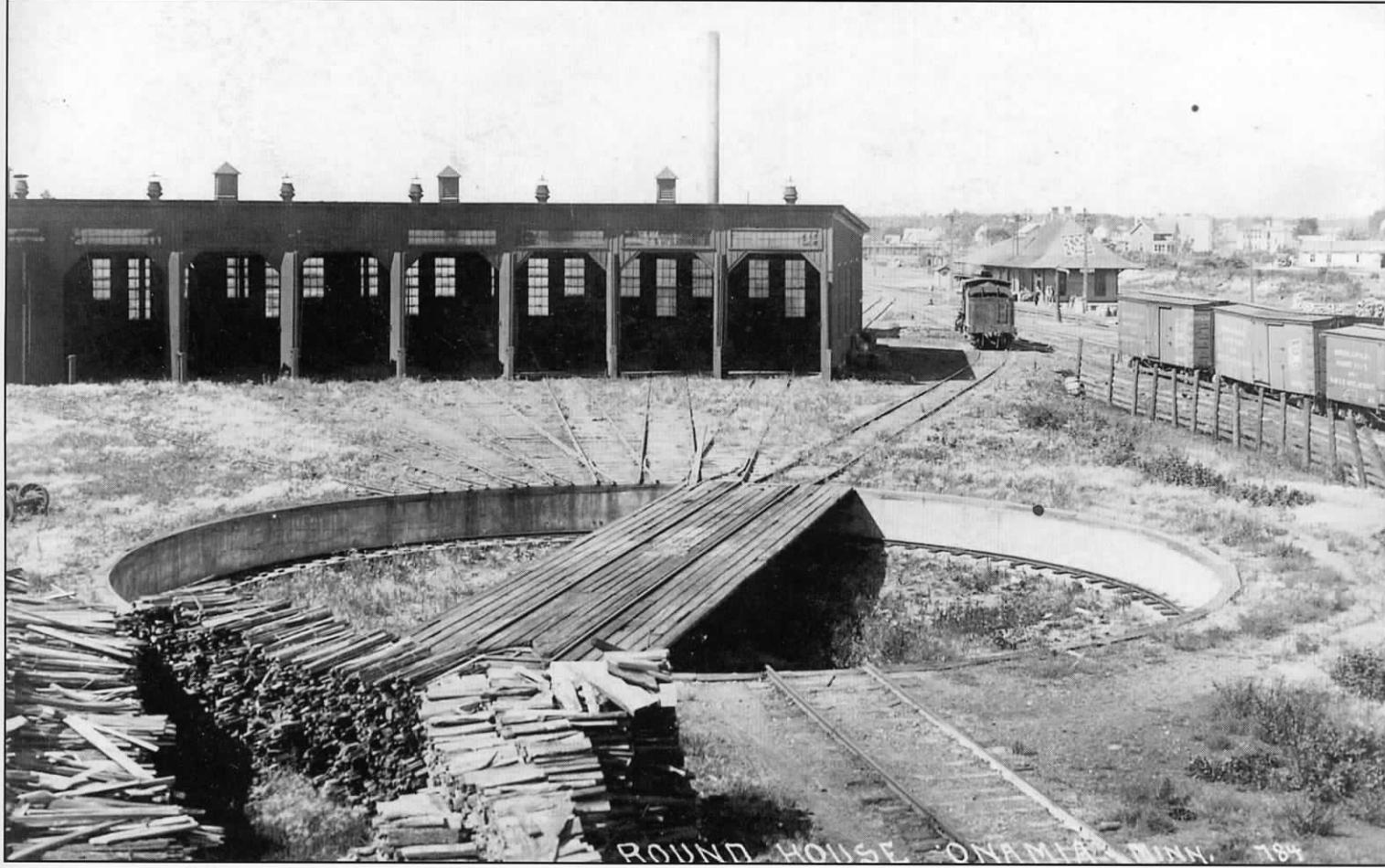
The bridge changed at its midpoint, from large rounded arches to a trestle topped with less prominent arches. This view looks north as the bridge crosses over the parkway.





These 1940s scenes show the south end of the bridge at the intersection of Bryant and 53rd Street. The bridge split Bryant into one way lanes connecting 53rd Street with Minnehaha Parkway. Top photo by Kirt Blewett.





Onamia was one of the state's more obscure division points. The Soo Line's Brooten Line was a grain hauling cutoff to Duluth-Superior. It was one of Minnesota's later new railroads, completed in 1909. Minnesota Historical Society collection.
A Burlington E-unit in Northfield? This seemingly unlikely event is the joint Burlington-Rock Island Zephyr Rocket which ran between Minneapolis and St. Louis with pooled equipment. The date is December 26, 1966. Baron Behning photo.





About 20-25 years separate these two pairs of photos taken on the Milwaukee Road at Cologne, and changes can be seen. The newer photos on the opposite page, date from 1970. During that time passenger service has ended, the Railway Express Agency sign has been removed, a pair of doors have been added to store speeders inside the depot, and a new phone line mast has appeared above the operator's bay window. And, of course, s2-8-2 #522 and the EMD FT diesels are long gone. Bill Marshall and Joe Elliott photos.







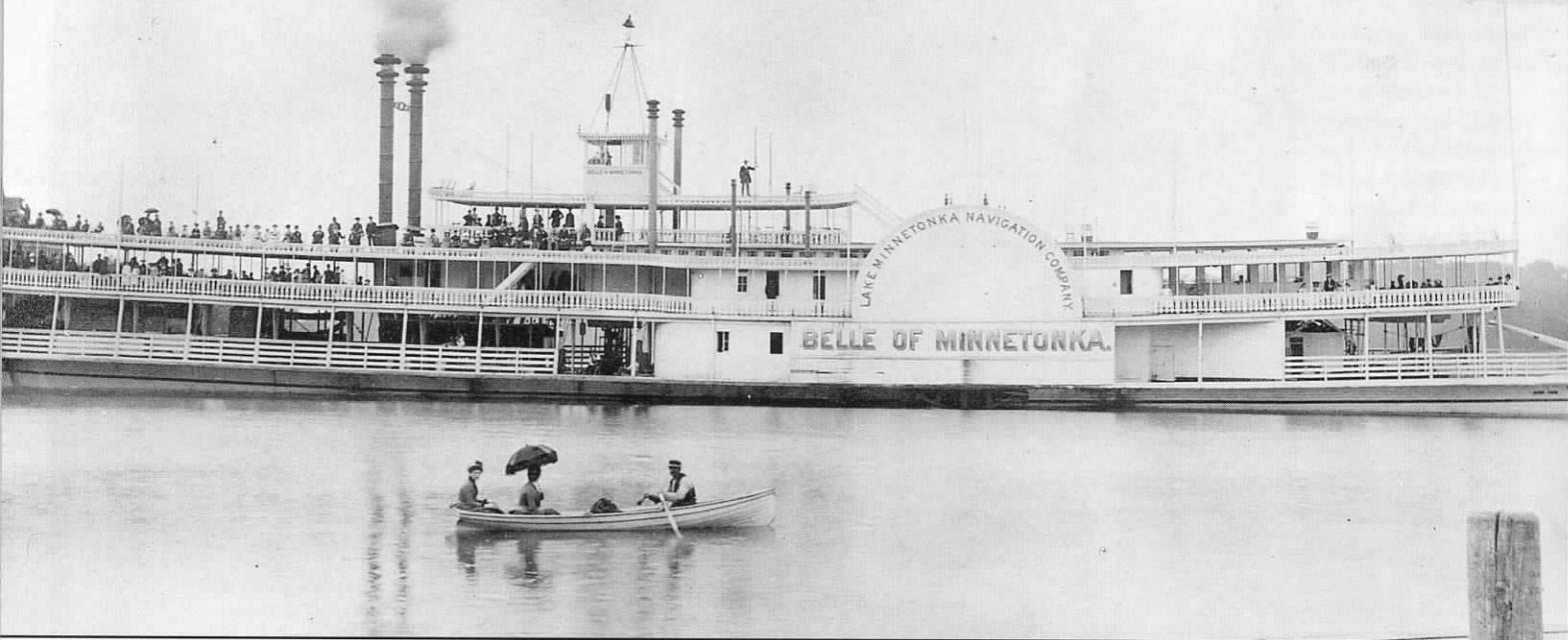
These three photos were taken on April 13, 1939 to document an accident. Minneapolis Eastern 0-6-0 #1 had hit a truck while crossing 2nd Street next to the Milwaukee Road freight house. The photos pan from northwest to southeast, showing the freight house, Railway Express Agency trucks and #1, still in place following the accident. The Ceresota Elevator, just to the left of the locomotive, currently houses the Hiawatha LRT design and construction offices. The photos were just donated to MTM by member John Winter.



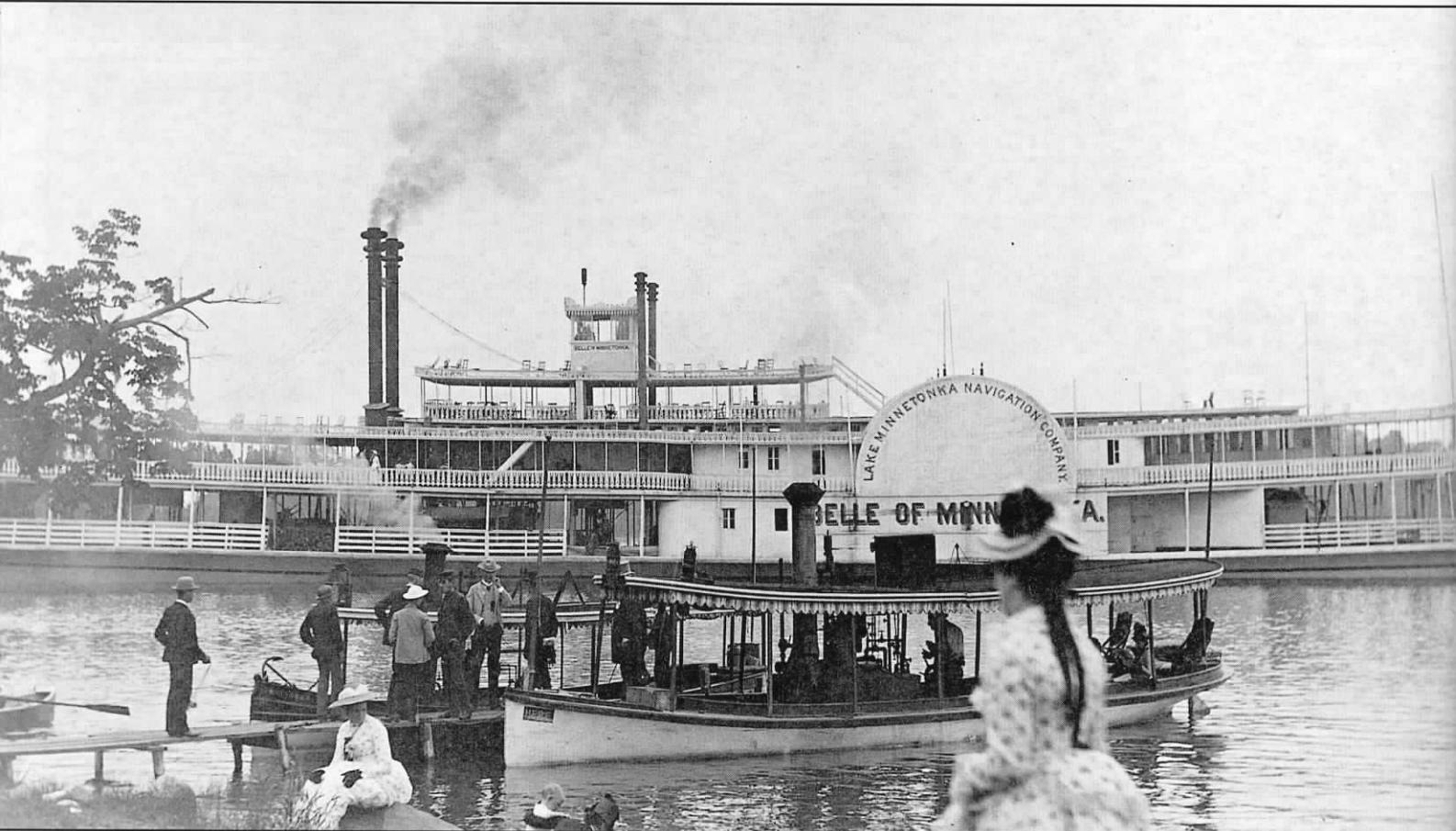
Opposite page: Obscure Depots on Parade. This is the original Chicago Great Western depot in Minneapolis. The stub end depot was located on Washington Ave. S. at 10th Ave. We don't know much about it, but suppose that it was abandoned in favor of the new Great Northern depot on Hennepin Avenue, opened in 1914. The building survived minus its cupola, housing the Minnesota Salt Company. It eventually was occupied by the Liquor Depot, still open in a never building nearby. Both Minnesota Historical Society collection.







These two 1880s photos illustrate well how the Belle of Minnetonka's 300-foot length overwhelmed any scene it entered. The bottom view, by Jacoby, is at the Lake Park Hotel in Tonka Bay. In the foreground is the small steamboat Hebe, and another unidentified boat. Both Minnesota Historical Society collection.



Inside rear cover: The Minnehaha, the Mayflower and a second express boat have a full head of steam and are throwing large bow waves as they accelerate into the lake. The photo location is unidentified, but the Editor conjectures that it's Excelsior Bay. There would be simultaneous departures of the two express boats and a lake tour boat after the arrival of their streetcar connection. Hibbard photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Rear cover: The late Gene Corbey's collection included this builder's photo of Twin City Lines GMC Model TDH-5103 #977 in 1952. It was part of the first order of buses that displaced the streetcars and probably shows a location in the manufacturer's home town of Pontiac, MI. MTM collection.







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